

# SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA<sup>1</sup>

Monday, August 9, 2010 ~ 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Purpose Of/Desired Outcomes For This Meeting:** The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your vision for MCOG, the future role of MCOG in achieving that vision, and specific methods for project facilitation and leveraging funds that you would support.

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	PROCESS	RESPONSIBLE
10:30 – 10:35	<b>I. Introduction to the Strategic Planning Workshop</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of the Meeting ~ Meeting Guidelines ~ Parking Lot ~ Decision-making</li> </ul>	Inform	Sue Haun, Facilitator
10:35 – 10:45	<b>II. Mission &amp; Vision</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purpose and Definitions</li> <li>MCOG's Mission</li> </ul>	Inform	Sue Haun
10:45 – 11:45	<b>III. Aim, Impacts, Outcome - Your Vision for MCOG</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>As MCOG, what do you want to create, experience or impact in the community?</i></li> </ul>	Discuss	All
11:45 – 12:15	<b>Lunch</b>		
12:15 – 1:25	<b>IV. Future Role of MCOG</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Types of Regional Projects Funded/Not Funded by MCOG (<i>please see handout</i>)</li> <li>Historic Role of MCOG and Other Possible Roles (<i>please see handout</i>)</li> <li><i>What future role do you want MCOG to play with respect to each of the 5 project types?</i></li> </ul>	Inform  Discuss	Phil Dow, Executive Director  All
1:25 – 1:35	<b>Break</b>		
1:35 – 2:50	<b>V. Project Facilitation &amp; Leveraging Funds</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition of “Strategic” Project Choices (<i>please see handout</i>)</li> <li><i>Possible Additions to Criterion for “Strategic” Project Choices</i></li> <li>Project Facilitation &amp; Leveraging Funds: Issues for Consideration and Discussion (<i>please see handout</i>)</li> <li><i>Which types of project facilitation/project development would you support and under what conditions? How does this impact the application process?</i></li> </ul>	Inform Brainstorm Inform Discuss	Phil Dow All Phil Dow All
2:50 – 3:00	<b>VI. Wrap-Up</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Immediate Next Steps ~ Meeting Review</i></li> </ul>	Define, +/Δ	Chair Dan Gjerde, Sue Haun

<sup>1</sup> In preparation for the meeting, please review the following documents provided under separate cover: *Types of Regional Projects Funded/Not Funded by MCOG, Historic Role of MCOG and Other Possible Roles, Strategic Project Choices, and Project Facilitation & Leveraging Funds: Issues for Consideration and Discussion.*

Date: August 4, 2010

To: MCOG Board

From: Dan Gjerde

Re: Strategic Planning Workshop: Vision for MCOG & Future Role for MCOG

Here is why we should all be excited by the Mendocino Council of Governments: It provides us with an opportunity to build the communities we all say we want in our general plans and other community plans. This is possible because with the passage of SB45 in 1997, MCOG grew from a \$1 million a year organization that provided for transportation plans and advocacy to a \$6 million a year organization that also helps fund the construction of transportation projects.

The City of Fort Bragg has focused its partnership with MCOG to build a number of small road and sidewalk projects, with a goal of improving mobility and access for everyone, as well as reducing our dependency on oil. Fort Bragg's priority comes directly from its various plans. From the Inland General Plan, Circulation Element: "Purpose: Encourage public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian movement, and other alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle." From the 2009 Bicycle Master Plan: "Fort Bragg, as part of its effort to be a sustainable and healthy community, shall be a city where cycling for transit or pleasure is a natural choice because it is safe, enjoyable and convenient."

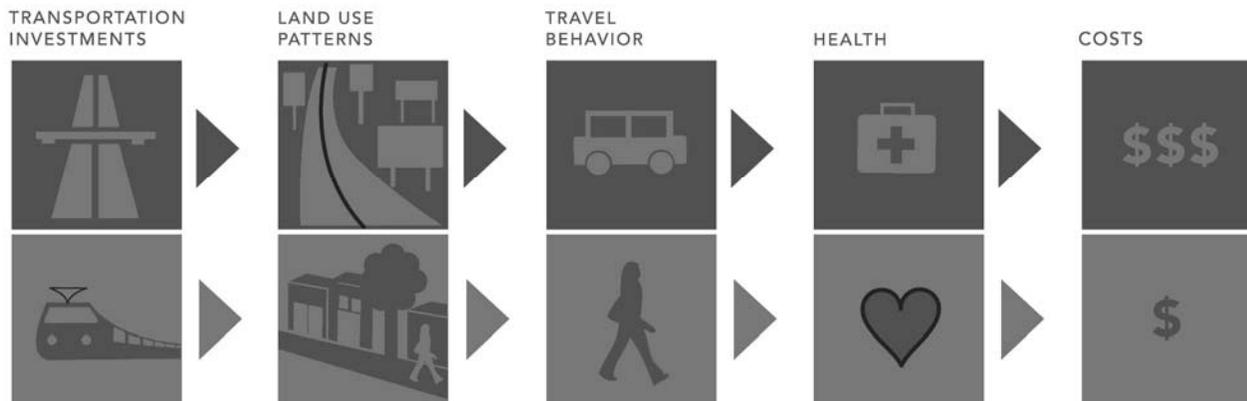
You have all seen the improvements. Fort Bragg is scheduled to completely reconstruct its downtown streets with wider sidewalks by the end of 2013, and MCOG has provided 72% of the project's current funding. In other neighborhoods, Fort Bragg has recently built approximately \$3 million worth of new, fully accessible sidewalks, with MCOG providing roughly 60% of those funds. While completing Fort Bragg's network of ADA-compliant sidewalks could easily cost an additional \$6 million, according to my back-of-the-envelope estimate, Fort Bragg is already becoming much more accessible for pedestrians of all abilities.

In fact, we have evidence this investment is yielding tangible results. In 2009, the City of Fort Bragg conducted an extensive survey of local households, and found that 20 percent of all trips by town residents are on foot. Another five percent of all trips are on bicycles. This is double the national average, with the 2009 National Household Travel Survey showing the two modes had climbed to 12% of all trips.

This type of investment can produce equally impressive results in all of our towns. We are a rural county, true, but we are also a county of many towns – several of which are located in unincorporated parts of Mendocino County. If we prioritize our transportation investments for building Complete Streets in our many towns, we can:

- 1) Create Safe Routes for Seniors, expanding upon the Safe Routes to Schools program
- 2) Connect population centers to workplaces and services – improving community health
- 3) Encourage infill development, which is less costly to serve than sprawl
- 4) Reduce dependency on oil and reduce emissions of green house gasses
- 5) Save residents thousands of dollars each year, because they will have the option to live without car ownership, or without the ownership of multiple cars per household

## HOW TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS HEALTH AND EQUITY COSTS



**THE HIDDEN HEALTH COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION**, a report prepared by Urban Design 4 Health, Inc. and the American Public Health Association, February 2010.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transportation investments and the systems that are developed from them shape lives and communities. Transportation systems are a complex web of highways, sidewalks, bike paths, trains and bus services that connect people to each other as well as to places of work, play, prayer, medical care, and shopping. Transportation policies and decisions influence land use and how communities and neighborhoods are designed and built—whether sprawling and disconnected, or central and connected.

The combustion engine and the creation of the highway system increased mobility and access to goods and services. However, investments in highways have come at the expense of other transportation modes. Over the years this has led to a heavier reliance on vehicles and roadways and less on walking, bicycling and transit use.

Further, suburban development has resulted in communities that are away from town centers and public transit and require a near-total reliance on the automobile for transport and access. Our dependence on automobiles and roadways has profound negative impacts on human health: decreased opportunities for physical activity, and increased exposure to air pollution, and the number of traffic crashes.

The health costs associated with these impacts, including costs associated with loss of work days and wages, pain and suffering, and premature death, may be as high as several hundred billion dollars.

An investment in a “healthier” transportation system is critical. Providing convenient alternatives, encouraging active modes of transport, and a establishing a transportation system that fosters connectivity and social interaction can not only offset health impacts and costs, but generate health benefits.

For the report, go to: <http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/E71B4070-9B9D-4EE1-8F43349D21414962/0/FINALHiddenHealthCostsShortNewBackCover.pdf>

# Strategic Planning Workshop

## Supplemental Information (IV.Future Role of MCOG IV – Types of Projects)

Over the years, MCOG has provided funding for planning, project development (environmental review & design), right-of-way, and construction for several types of transportation modes:

- State Highway Improvement Projects
  - Willits Bypass right-of-way and construction
  - U.S. 101 Ukiah Valley Interchange Study (short & long-term needs)
  - Highway 1 Intersection Study (short & long-term needs)
  - Highway 1/Simpson Lane Intersection construction
- Local Streets & Roads Projects
  - North State Street Widening Project
  - East Side Potter Valley Road Widening Project
  - Gobbi St./Babcock Ln./Oak Manor Intersection Improvement (Ukiah)
  - West Commercial Street Improvement (Willits)
  - Main Street Merge Project (Ft. Bragg)
- Regional Circulation Projects
  - Brooktrails Second Access (Brooktrails-Willits)
  - Redemeyer Road Extension (Ukiah Valley)
  - Mitchell Creek Area Second Access (east of SR1, south of F.B.)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects
  - Downtown Streetscape Project (Fort Bragg)
  - South Main Street Sidewalks (Willits)
  - Vichy Springs Road Bikeway (Ukiah Valley)
  - Port Road Bikeway (Point Arena)
  - Numerous ADA improvements (County, Ft. Bragg, Willits, Ukiah)
- Public Transit Projects
  - Transit Vehicle Replacements
  - Pedestrian Access to MTA Bus Stop (Mendocino)

In the past, MCOG has also funded two other funding categories:

- Streets & Roads Rehabilitation Projects
  - MCOG policy no longer supports Regional Improvement Program funds for rehabilitation (overlay) projects
- Rail Grade Crossing Improvements
  - All approved projects not yet complete

# Strategic Planning Workshop

## Supplemental Information (IV. Future Role of MCOG IV – Historic Role of MCOG)

MCOG's role has not been static over the years. It has changed as a result of State and Federal policy as well as Board action. It now includes discretionary as well as mandated functions. In general, MCOG's role changed by decade as indicated below:

### 1970's

- MCOG created through MOU for region-wide transportation planning, economic development, and other regional issues
- Transportation Development Act mandated certain duties to MCOG

### 1980's

- MCOG mandated by State to do Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)
- Rural Counties Task Force created urging rural RTPAs to become more involved in statewide issues
- MCOG assumes role of bikeway facilitation by developing Regional Bikeway plan

### 1990's

- More planning funding becomes available; Work Program expands
- SB 45 provides programming capability for state highway and other projects; begins programming streets/roads/transit/non-motorized projects
- MCOG begins receiving federal RSTP funds; passes through to locals
- MCOG assumes role of Pavement Management Program coordination
- Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEA) funding becomes available to MCOG

### 2000's

- Funding for planning increased; Work Program expanded
- MCOG mandated to provide function of Native American tribal liaison in region
- Grant coordination and grant administration increases
- MCOG mandated to administer stimulus program (ARRA)
- MCOG designated to administer Blueprint Planning per SB 375 implementation

In accordance with its role under SB 45, MCOG has displayed an ACTIVE role in developing projects for the State highway system. MCOG has been SEMI-ACTIVE in selecting major (regionally significant) local streets & roads projects and bike/pedestrian projects for funding. In other cases it has been PASSIVE in selecting local streets & roads as well as transit projects for funding. For the most part, MCOG has selected the best project submitted at a particular point in time. There has been little consideration given to the selection of projects that are consistent with or will implement a definitive transportation vision. Due to the increased emphasis to deal with transportation as a regional issue, should all or most of project funding be set aside for projects that are consistent with or otherwise implement MCOG's vision? Should MCOG play an active role in all transportation modes?

## Strategic Planning Workshop

### Supplemental Information (V. Project Facilitation & Leveraging – Strategic Project Choices)

When first given programming authority for State Highway projects in 1998, MCOG exercised a strategy of prioritizing a project that was long on top of the list in the Regional Transportation Plan for State highway improvements with the goal of improving State highway safety and circulation as well as improving safety, air quality, and circulation in Willits. This particular project is consistent with the Route Concept Report for U.S. 101. But for most other projects considered for funding, projects were selected from those priorities submitted by our member agencies (in other words, their priorities – not necessarily the regional transportation planning agency priorities). We generally selected the best projects among from priorities of member agencies.

What could we mean by “strategic” project choices? Examples are:

- Prioritizing transportation projects that implement the Blueprint (when completed) such as a transportation project that will facilitate infill
- Prioritizing Bike/pedestrian projects that implement a future Rails with Trails Plan
- Prioritizing transportation projects in communities that have community action plans or design plans (Gualala, Laytonville, Point Arena, Ukiah, Fort Bragg, and Willits) that ensure that projects are consistent with long term community vision
- Prioritizing State highway projects in communities where the State highway is “Main Street”

Decision making criteria for projects utilized in the past included:

- ADT (Average Daily Traffic) on or near roadway
- Safety index (intersection accidents per year or accidents per million vehicle miles)
- Financial participation by partner (leveraging)
- Others (functional classification, geographic equity, air quality, timeliness, etc.)

New criteria to actively implement strategic planning could include:

- Requirement that all projects must be identified in or consistent with future Blueprint Plan and applicable specific (community) plans
- More rigid commitment from partner agencies to follow through with future phases when MCOG’s participation is complete
- Consideration of non-transportation impacts of project (community health, housing, economic development)
- Others?

# Strategic Planning Workshop

## Supplemental Information (V. Project Facilitation a & Leveraging – Issues for Consideration)

Regardless of the outcomes of this workshop relative to the future role of MCOG, and whether the fundamental role should be changed or expanded, there are some immediate and practical issues that need to be discussed at this time. In general, these issues deal with the effectiveness of MCOG and its member agencies in delivering competitive projects and leveraging available funding.

### **Issue 1: Should MCOG be responsible for project development for priority projects to ensure project readiness?**

Generally, MCOG has done transportation planning for transportation projects and other agencies have completed project development for projects (environmental and design) with either MCOG funding or local sources. Completion of project development would prepare a project for construction funding and ensure project readiness. The probable funding source for project development would be federal Surface Transportation Act (RSTP) funds that we currently share with the member agencies.

### **Issue 2: Should the Partnership Funding Program that was initiated several years ago with RSTP funding be continued through the life of the next federal transportation bill?**

Several years ago, in conjunction with increases to MCOG through the RSTP program, MCOG was authorized to retain funding “off the top” to be utilized to foster partnership development to implement projects that cross jurisdictional lines or are otherwise important regionally. This commitment runs through the life of SAFETEA-LU. This fund was first used to provide \$200,000 in funding to match the County participation in the Simpson Lane/SR 1 intersection project. The next likely candidate will be the Perkins St./US 101 interchange improvement project.

### **Issue 3: Should MCOG pursue expansion of the level of local assistance for its member agencies?**

Caltrans Local Assistance is available to assist the County and cities to make their way through the various procedures to implement a project with State or Federal funding. But Caltrans can only tell an entity when and how to do it (they don't perform the needed work for them). A growing problem in our area (and all rural areas) is the lack of available technical personnel to ensure that deliverables on schedule and projects are developed efficiently and on a timely basis. This level of expertise is dwindling at the local level as agencies have cut back personnel. It is proposed that MCOG could provide a person to help member entities deliver projects with State and/or Federal funding.

### **Issue 4: Should MCOG expand project selection criteria to increase the relative importance of leveraging and to reflect outcomes of this workshop?**

Funding is extremely limited and leveraging should be encouraged. The next MCOG funding cycle will begin in October for bicycle/pedestrian type projects. New evaluation criteria can be included with the fall cycle.