



Mendocino COGnizance

News from
Mendocino Council of Governments, the Regional Transportation Planning Agency
"A cog in the wheels of our transportation system"

Issue #16
Autumn
September 2013

Opportunities for 2014

After a dry spell of scarce state funding available to Mendocino County for regional transportation projects, we have not been optimistic about prospects for the 2014 cycle of Regional Improvement Program funds. In welcome news, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) adopted its 2014 Fund Estimate, identifying over \$6 million in new Regional Improvement Program shares for MCOG's programming authority.

Each odd-numbered year, the Council considers "programming" of projects for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) that goes into effect July 1 of the following year. We develop our Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to request these funding shares for projects that reflect MCOG's established priorities and those of the cities and County as members of the Council. All are subject to the CTC's adopted 2014 STIP Guidelines and approval. MCOG's anticipated schedule:

- August 26 - Begins 6-week RTIP Candidate Cycle
- October 4 - RTIP applications due to MCOG
- October 16 - Technical Advisory Committee Scoring and Funding Recommendations
- November 4: Board Review and Discussion of TAC Recommendations
- December 2 RTIP Adoption
- December 15 - RTIP due to CTC
- January 30 - Northern California STIP Hearings
- March 19 - CTC STIP Adoption

MAP-21, the latest federal reauthorization bill brought some significant changes. Programs that funded bicycle and pedestrian projects, transportation enhancements, and environmental mitigation projects through the STIP have been reorganized; most are transferred into a new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). California will no longer include these in its STIP. Instead they will be rolled into a more comprehensive, competitive statewide program called the Active Transportation Program. Stay tuned as details unfold.

Many constituents in the region will be glad to know that local projects will be eligible and considered for funding this cycle. Now that MCOG has fulfilled its shares of funding for the first phase of the U.S. 101 bypass around Willits in partnership with Caltrans, more funds will be available for local transportation priorities. Since SB 45 was enacted in 1997, MCOG has programmed at least half of all its regional funding shares for local improvements.

"Opportunities" continued Page 2



A segment of McKerricher State Park Haul Road on a beautiful summer day with the fog hanging just offshore.

MCOG Highlights of 2013

Pacific Coast Bike Route Study Completed

In February the Council accepted the Pacific Coast Bike Route & California Coastal Trail Engineered Feasibility Study, a partnership with Caltrans District 1 and a consultant team led by Alta Planning + Design, with extensive stakeholder input. Results can be used for future funding proposals to make safety improvements on segments of the 100 miles of State Route 1 in Mendocino County. Find a link to the report at: www.mendocinocog.org/

Audits Completed

Over the past year, MCOG's administrative staff successfully managed and cleared the annual fiscal audit and the triennial performance audit. We also oversaw Mendocino Transit Authority's triennial performance audit for compliance with the Transportation Development Act. A periodic "pre-award audit" for state and federal grants is partially complete, with a report anticipated in September.

New Satellite Call Boxes

In 2012, Mendocino SAFE began testing the first motorist aid call box in the nation using satellite communications, now performing well. Up to nine more are being installed along SR-162/Covelo Road, covering areas lacking adequate cell phone coverage. Eventually satellite call boxes will be installed countywide wherever there is poor or unreliable service. The system now has over 50 active boxes. View the 5-Year Plan at www.mendocinocog.org/reports_projects.shtml

2013/14 Calendar

Board Meetings - Agendas & Packets at www.mendocinocog.org
1st Monday at 1:30 p.m., nine to ten months a year, at County Administration Center, Board of Supervisors Chambers, Room 1070, 501 Low Gap Road, Ukiah. Planned highlights and recurring actions (subject to change):

Aug. 19 2014 STIP Overview; Pavement Mgmt. Presentation
Zero Emission Vehicle Regional Readiness Plan

Sep. 26 Special Meeting - MTA Transit Grant Approval

Oct. No Meeting in October

Nov. 4 Covelo/Round Valley Project Tour - On Location TBA

Dec. 2 TAC Recommendations: Adoption of 2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)
SSTAC Recommendations:
2014/15 Unmet Transit Needs - Public Hearing

Jan. No Meeting in January

Feb. 3 Elect Officers, Make Committee Appointments

Mar. 3 Executive Committee Recommendations:
Draft 2014/15 Budget

April 7 Regular Business

May 5 TPC Recommendations:
Unmet Transit Needs, Annual Transit Claim,
MTA Performance Review

June 2 Adopt 2014/15 RTPA Budget
Adopt 2014/15 Planning Overall Work Program

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

Feb. - TBA Budget Recommendations for 2014/15

Transit Productivity Committee (TPC)

Oct. - TBA: Review of Transit Performance Standards
Report of MTA Triennial Performance Audit

April - TBA: Annual Transit Performance
Unmet Transit Needs Recommendations
Review of Annual Transit Claim

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

3rd Wed. monthly unless cancelled/rescheduled (refer to website)

Social Services Trans. Advisory Council (SSTAC)

Spring: FTA transit grant applications for programs serving elders and people living with disabilities. Fall: Unmet Transit Needs Workshop.



US-101 Bypass
of Willits
right of way in
May 2013

MCOG's Purpose

The purpose of the Mendocino Council of Governments is to assist local governments in planning to address common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit, and coordinating for sound regional, community, and intercommunity development.

MCOG's Mission is

to provide regional, community, and intercommunity transportation planning,
to administer transportation funding and financing,
to represent Mendocino County's interests at higher levels of government,
to develop transportation projects for future funding,
to provide technical assistance for transportation project delivery,
to support rural/public transportation services,
to administer grants for transportation/community enhancement projects, and
to provide a forum to facilitate discussion on other matters of regional importance.

MCOG's Vision:

Regional and local government working together to connect communities, create thriving town centers, and develop healthy, livable neighborhoods for drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders.

Mission and Vision adopted by the Board of Directors 12/6/2010

MCOG was formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, the Transportation Development Act (TDA). MCOG is a political subdivision of the State of California. MCOG serves as the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) of Mendocino County, administering the call box program. At times MCOG also is involved with housing and economic development.

Opportunities - continued from Page 1

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met in August to discuss details of the 2014 STIP cycle, as well as competition for MCOG's Local Transportation Fund 2% Bicycle & Pedestrian program to run along with the RTIP process.

The \$6.4 million represents an approximate County Minimum "total target" as the CTC's first priority for new programming. A higher maximum figure is issued but not guaranteed, and its potential funding historically has not materialized. "We may choose to program the full \$10.01 million in our RTIP, but the CTC is not obligated to program any more than our County Minimum of \$6.72 million. In this era of constrained resources this is unlikely unless a project in our RTIP has very high regional or statewide significance," reported Executive Director Phil Dow. "We should be able to complete construction of projects previously initiated, as well as program new projects throughout the region."

The 2014 STIP cycle provides MCOG with the largest Regional Improvement Program share since bond funds became available to supplement the 2006 STIP.

Planning Program

This is another active year for MCOG planning, with an extensive work program of 26 projects (see list at right). In addition to day-to-day work of our staff transportation planners and projects conducted by our city and county member agencies, we have been fortunate to win several grant awards for community plans.

VisionMendocino 2030 is now wrapping up a third phase, which identified a Preferred Growth Scenario. A Public Review Draft Blueprint Plan was released in August. The fourth and final phase will implement recommended strategies to guide sustainable change in Mendocino County over the next 20 years. More info: Nephela at MCOG or www.visionmendocino2030.org/

Covelo and Round Valley are in a remote corner of Mendocino County on State Route 162. The downtown and most heavily used area of the corridor are under study for non-motorized transportation improvements and other needs and gaps. Prioritized projects will be positioned for funding. More info: Loretta at MCOG.

Anderson Valley is the site of the next community based transportation planning grant project. The State Route 128 Corridor Valley Trail Engineered Feasibility Study is ongoing through June 2014, with fall and spring public workshops. More info: Janet at MCOG.

Zero Emission Vehicles are coming! The Mendocino County ZEV Regional Readiness Plan was presented to the Council and accepted at its August meeting, recommending 18 public charging stations countywide. More info: Janet at MCOG, or www.mendocinocog.org.

Up next are two projects on US-101 with Caltrans District 1, to study Hopland safety improvements in lieu of a bypass, and a Ukiah area microsimulation model.

Budget Adopted

On June 3, MCOG adopted a budget for FY 2013/14 funds that flow through the agency's cash accounts. Other funds are programmed by MCOG but remain in State accounts, such as the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for capital projects. Regional Surface Transportation Program allocations are made by a pre-approved formula. Following is a summary of MCOG's budget (prior to amendment of the OWP on August 19). The complete budget is available on our website. Contact Janet for more information.

2013/14 Budget Allocations

Local Transportation Fund	3,350,832
State Transit Assistance	586,324
Transit Capital Reserve	475,862
Planning, Program'g & Monitor'g	213,399
Rural Planning Assistance	275,000
State & Federal Planning Grants	262,350
Regional Surface Transportation Program	686,642
Regional Blueprint Planning	93,520
<u>Local Mini-Grants</u>	<u>29,250</u>
<u>Total Budget Allocations</u>	<u>5,973,179</u>

Meet Our Staff

James Sookne joined the Dow & Associates staff to fill a new position of Regional Project Manager in January 2012. Since some of the local member agencies have



reduced staff capacity, he assists with advancing transportation project priorities. James previously worked as an Engineering Technician for the County's transportation department, after graduating from Sonoma State. A dedicated family man, he enjoys sports, computers, cooking and travel. In his own words, "I like to keep it low key."

MCOG Projects for 2013/14

The Planning program funds public projects with local, state and federal transportation revenues. MCOG staff develops and manages the program. The Technical Advisory Committee ranks and reviews project applications, which are subject to approval by the MCOG Board and Caltrans.

Transportation Planning Overall Work Program (OWP) Elements - as amended:

- 1 - Current Planning
- 2 - Long Range Planning
- 3 - City of Ukiah - Storm Drain Maint. & Rehab. Study *
- 4 - County DOT - Urbanized Area Storm Water Systems
- 5 - County DOT - Safe Routes to School Plan *
- 6 - County DOT - Combined Special Studies
- 7 - STIP Planning, Programming & Monitoring
- 8 - City of Ukiah - Gateway Streetscape Study - Perkins St.
- 9 - City of Ukiah - Bicycle & Ped. Master Plan Update *
- 10 - Regional Transportation Plan - 2015 Update, Phase 1
- 11 - City of Fort Bragg - City Surrounded by a Bike Path
- 12 - City of Fort Bragg - Way Finding Signage Plan *
- 13 - Climate Change Adaptation Pilot Strategy
- 14 - Training
- 15 - Zero Emission Vehicle Regional Readiness Plan *
- 16 - Multi-Modal Transportation Planning
- 17 - Regional Blueprint, Phases 3 & 4 *
- 18 - Geographic Information System Activities
- 19 - SR 128 Corridor Valley Trail Feasibility Study *
- 20 - Grant Development & Assistance
- 21 - Hopland US-101/Main St. Engineered Feasibility Study
- 22 - Round Valley Non-Motorized Needs Tech. Study *
- 23 - US-101 Greater Ukiah Area Microsimulation Model
- 24 - Regional Project Management
- 26 - SR 162 Covelo Engineered Feasibility Study *
- 27 - Safe Routes to School Mini-Grants *

* Carryover from prior year.

For program details, contact Loretta at MCOG.

Willits Bypass Takes Shape

Construction of this major highway project began in February 2013, after 14 years of CEQA environmental work and six more years to secure funding and resource agency permits. It is now well underway and showing real signs of progress along the route. Traveling northbound, the southern Haehl Creek interchange site now reveals a scenic view of Little Lake Valley.

The project has continued to be controversial. Obstruction at the site has resulted in costly delays, including the costs of California Highway Patrol right-of-way enforcement. MCOG is a funding partner with Caltrans to build the bypass on US-101 around the town. So inevitably, we will be called upon to contribute our proportionate share to pay for these added costs.

The project is approximately 25% complete, and work will be halted in mid-October for the winter. For more information, visit: <http://willitsbypass.wordpress.com>.

This project has long been planned as MCOG's highest state highway priority in the region and so is considered a significant accomplishment for the agency, its members and constituents.

Council Tours South Coast

Since 2006, MCOG has taken its board meetings on the road once a year to view first hand the many transportation plans and projects in this diverse county of Mendocino. In November 2012, we toured the south coast, where several projects have been ongoing. These include the Downtown Gualala Streetscape Plan, sections of the California Coastal Trail, the Safe Routes to School grant project in Point Arena, and plans for a new bridge at Windy Hollow Road. A side trip down Iverson/Port Road to Arena Cove showed off the city's boat launching facility at the pier. The day wound up with discussion at City Hall. A bus and driver were graciously provided by MTA.



Top of page:
View of bypass
work from East
Commercial
Street on the
north end.



Above and R:
Our tour group navigates
a Gualala walkway;
the view from Elk;
and a slight delay at
construction of the new
Greenwood Creek Bridge.



Board of Directors

Dan Gjerde, Chair
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Doug Hammerstrom
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Trevor Sanders
Point Arena City Councilmember
Susan Ranochak
County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder
Brad Mettam
MCOG Policy Advisory Committee
Caltrans District 1 Deputy Director

Alternates

Carre Brown - Board of Supervisors
Lauren Sinnott - County Appointee
Meg Courtney - Fort Bragg City Council
Larry Stranske - Willits City Council

MCOG Staff

Administration and Planning services are under contract with Dow & Associates. Staff includes:

Phil Dow, P. E., Executive Director
Loretta Ellard, Assistant Executive Director
Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration
Nephele Barrett, Senior Planner
Terri Persons, Associate Planner
Alexis Pedrotti, GIS & SAFE Coordinator
James Sookne, Regional Project Manager
Jeannie Clark and Charlene Parker, Support Staff

Contact the MCOG Office at:
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Mendocino COGNizance is published by Janet at MCOG.