

MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Approved MINUTES
Monday, November 1, 2010
Ukiah City Council Chambers

ADDITIONAL AUDIOCONFERENCE LOCATION:
Caltrans District 1
1656 Union St., Eureka

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 / Roll Call . The meeting was called to order at 1:37 p.m. with Directors Jackman (PAC), Sinnott, Rodin, Stranske, Pinches, and Gjerde present; Chair Gjerde presiding. Rex Jackman of Caltrans District 1 (PAC) joined the meeting by audioconference. Director Smith arrived directly following roll call. Director Ranochak was excused.

Staff present: Phil Dow, Executive Director; Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration; Loretta Ellard, Assistant Executive Director; and Nephele Barrett, Senior Planner.

2. Convene as RTPA

3. Recess as RTPA - Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee.

Director Smith arrived at 1:38 p.m.

Public Expression. None.

4 - 6. Regular Calendar.

4. Presentation of Report: MCOG Travel Demand Forecasting Model. Mr. Dow described the project in MCOG's planning program, an extension of the travel model that Fehr & Peers developed for the Ukiah Valley area, expanded countywide. MCOG also contracted with County of Mendocino for staffing assistance and experience working with the previous model.

He then introduced the Fehr & Peers consultants, Julie Morgan, Principal in charge of the project and Mark Feldman, project manager. Ms. Morgan began the slide presentation and handed out the printed report with copies of the presentation. She explained the modeling process in general terms. The intent is forecasting, a tool in the planning process. The model includes where people live, work and travel; the transportation system; and other data. It is calibrated and validated for accuracy: data is tested by running the model and other steps, to see how well real world conditions are replicated.

Mr. Feldman continued the presentation, detailing Mendocino County's model more specifically, showing examples of model validation steps and results. Once data is determined to be accurate within certain parameters, forecasting begins. Examples were given of specific roads identified for model forecasting (Willits with and without a bypass was one example of present and future traffic levels). The roadway network and land uses are correlated. Other model uses include

tracking performance measures, evaluating changes to infrastructure or land use, and assisting for conformity with climate change regulations. Q&A during and after the presentation included:

- Vehicle trips (one-way) are counted, rather than person-trips.
- Choice of transportation mode is not included in this model. An assumption was made at the start of model development to base it on personal vehicle use primarily, with public transit as an alternate mode choice.
- Can Council members experiment with the model? (Sinnott) No, as it requires costly specialized software to run it, but some activities can be done using the more available GIS software.
- How can the model establish a baseline for later evaluation of efforts such as trip reduction, greenhouse gas reductions, or land-use changes? (Smith, Gjerde) It can be done with time, effort, data collection, and recalibration of the model. One way would be to convert from a vehicle-trip model to a person-trip model. (Discussion of cost-efficient, time-efficient ways to add model applications.)
- Can local city staff be trained to use this model, with alternate modes of walking and cycling? (Gjerde) The skill set for use of the model requires training and practice, difficult to maintain if not used often.
- What is being done to inform local entities this is available? (Rodin) Local technical staff members were involved in development of this project. (Dow)

A motion was made by Director Rodin, seconded by Director Sinnott, to accept the “Final Model Development Report: MCOG Travel Demand Forecasting Model.”

Discussion on the motion included distinctions between running the model and using GIS maps already produced from the model, and ways to show changes in modal choices.

Howard Dashiell, Director, Mendocino County Department of Transportation (MDOT), thanked the Council and consultants for a good report, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to work on this project as well as the previous study for the Ukiah Valley area. He commented on specifics in the report and agreed with the forecast on Page 42. The model will be a good basis for studies and environmental documentation for projects such as Windy Hollow Road in Point Arena. He prefers to leave technical model tasks to the experts.

The motion carried unanimously on roll call vote (*7 Ayes – Jackman/PAC, Sinnott, Rodin, Stranske, Pinches, Smith, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - Ranochak*): IT IS ORDERED that the Final Model Development Report: MCOG Travel Demand Forecasting Model, prepared by Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants, is accepted.

Director Sinnott thanked the Fehr & Peers representatives for data used in City of Point Arena’s successful Safe Routes to Schools grant application.

5. Review and Discussion of Draft 2010 Regional Transportation Plan. Ms. Barrett gave an overview of progress made to date. She noted an addition to the Goals & Policies, “Transportation Security and Emergency Response.” Most of the document is new to the Council members; she summarized content of the draft RTP, including new elements.

She reported discussions with MCOG’s consultant, Leonard Charles, regarding environmental requirements. It has not yet been determined what is needed for this update. There is a reduction of major transportation projects and potential environmental impacts in this RTP. If a supplement is called for, adoption of the RTP would not be agendized in December, due to additional time for public notice and comment. She noted changes still pending to address comments from MTA on transit financing.

Mr. Dow noted delays in producing this five-year RTP update, caused in part by the federal stimulus program and Regional Blueprint grant project. Staff then invited questions and comments. Issues raised included the following:

- Discrepancy of Brooktrails Second Access program year in travel model report versus draft RTP. (Pinches) Staff will correct the error.
- Distinctions between capacity improvement needs listed and safety/operational needs. Forecasts for 20-year horizon versus projects already programmed for construction, i.e. East Side Potter Valley Road. (Pinches, Dow, Dashiell)
- Suggestion to add under “Non-motorized Transportation System” support facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, such as bike racks and parking, in addition to major infrastructure, such as bicycle lanes and sidewalks. (Gjerde) Staff agreed to add a paragraph.
- Suggestion to add a section under Goals & Policies for unimproved roads addressing County maintenance responsibilities, including various potential funding resources and other unique circumstances. (Smith) Discussion on how to acknowledge and address, noting usage changes, funding limitations, developer fee potential, and air quality aspects.
- Brief discussion of Rail and Aviation elements.

Mr. Dow agreed to work with Mr. Dashiell on addressing in the RTP comments and issues pertaining to unimproved County roads. Ms. Barrett requested any further comments to be submitted to her by November 15 to be included in the next draft of the document for review by the environmental consultant. There will be opportunities for comment until the RTP is adopted in a public hearing. No action was taken.

6. MCOG Strategic Planning: Discussion of Mission and Vision – *continued from October 4, 2010.*

The draft statements were reviewed.

- Mr. Dashiell submitted comments from Mr. Bob Parker, Assistant Director, MDOT, adding the word “intercommunity” as pertaining to planning and development in the Mission Statement. He also suggested adding “reliably and effectively” to the Vision Statement phrase, “*Regional and county government working together to connect communities...*” Discussion followed.
- Chair Gjerde suggested changing “city” centers to “town” centers.

Staff was directed to return with proposed changes for consideration. No action was taken.

7. Consent Calendar. A motion was made by Director Rodin, seconded by Director Smith, to approve the consent calendar. Discussion on the motion: Director Rodin proposed having future meeting minutes in the “action minutes” format, substantially reducing the level of detail. After comments by council members and staff, Chair Gjerde referred the matter to the Executive Committee. **The motion carried** unanimously on roll call vote (*7 Ayes – Jackman/PAC, Sinnott, Rodin, Stranske, Pinches, Smith, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - Ranochak*): IT IS ORDERED that consent items are approved:

7. Approval of October 4, 2010 Minutes – *as written*

8. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee. Upon motion by Pinches, second by Rodin, and carried unanimously on roll call vote (*6 Ayes – Sinnott, Rodin, Stranske, Pinches, Smith, and Gjerde; 0 Noes; 0 Abstaining; 1 Absent - Ranochak*): IT IS ORDERED that the actions taken by the Policy Advisory Committee are ratified by the MCOG Board of Directors.

9. Reports - Information

- a. Mendocino Transit Authority. Mr. Bruce Richard, General Manager, covered several items:
- In response to a question (Agenda #4) about using the travel model for carpools and vanpools, he noted MTA has a major program already started called Mobility Management. The initial effort will be a volunteer driver program in Laytonville and Round Valley, matching drivers with riders, as recommended by the recent Transportation Commute Study. Eventually carpooling and vanpooling will be addressed in areas of the county where population density is too low to support traditional transit service. A new Mobility Management coordinator was hired last week.
 - A brief discussion of Willits flex route performance.
 - Operations still suffer for lack of funds, despite recent grants restricted to capital projects.
 - MTA is pleased to announce federal grants received for two capital projects. \$5 million (to be combined with other funds in hand from state sources) will build a new shop building to the highest standards of sustainability, reduce energy usage and greatly improve working conditions. \$470,000 (toward a \$522,000 project) from the Transportation Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) program will build solar photovoltaic canopies over bus parking stalls in MTA's Ukiah yard, enough to generate electricity to run the office. This will save about \$10,000 per year in energy costs, while providing shade and weather protection for the fleet, for further savings. Both were highly competitive grants. Federal funds cannot be prioritized to local contractors, but some of the work will go to Mendocino County businesses.

Council members congratulated MTA on their successful grant proposals.

- b. North Coast Railroad Authority. Chair Gjerde and Director Rodin reported on a state Bicycle Transportation Account grant received by City of Ukiah for design and construction of a bicycle route along the railroad tracks. Congratulations followed and discussion of how this project could be coordinated with MCOG's recent grant for a Rails with Trails Corridor Plan.
- c. MCOG Administration & Planning Staff
1. *Summary of Meetings*. Mr. Dow referred to his written staff report. He noted that Alexis Pedrotti of his staff attended a week-long Transportation Planning Academy in Redding, mostly funded by Caltrans. He considers the training a good value for MCOG staff who have attended to date. Mr. Jackman responded that Caltrans is glad to be able to provide this training opportunity. Ms. Ellard handed out an invitation flyer to the upcoming Community Based Transportation Planning workshop in Westport.
 2. *US-101 Bypass of Willits*. Mr. Dow handed out the California Transportation Commission's staff recommendation on Caltrans' request for a time extension on the November CTC agenda, a meeting he plans to attend. A brief discussion ensued of the Corps of Engineers' process and timeline for the project.
 3. *MCOG Status of Projects*. Several projects on the list were discussed. Of particular note was City of Point Arena's grant award of \$450,000 for its Safe Routes to School project, directly following their community based transportation planning project funded by Caltrans and sponsored by MCOG. Also, the Simpson Lane roundabout project is expected to start construction in spring of 2011. Other projects were noted.

4. *Regional Blueprint Planning.* Director Smith reported attending the workshop held in Fort Bragg. Mr. Dow and Ms. Barrett reported on workshops held to date, with a good level of participation. The last two workshops in this series are scheduled for Ukiah and Willits on November 6.

Director Smith left the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

5. *North State Super Region.* Mr. Dow reported on the inaugural meeting of October 20, attended by 16 regional agencies that are party to memoranda of agreement, all of them unanimously approved. Shasta and Butte representatives will serve as the first officers. Consensus will be sought on issues affecting all. He will keep the Council informed.
 6. *Miscellaneous.* None.
- d. MCOG Directors. Refer to Agenda #9c3 above for Director Sinnott's report. Chair Gjerde reported on his visit to Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) regional blueprint meeting, where three clear choices were voted on by stakeholders. Discussion followed on MCOG's 2% LTF Bicycle & Pedestrian Program upcoming funding cycle.

Director Jackman signed off the audioconference at appx. 4:30 p.m.

- e. California Association of Councils of Governments (CALCOG) Delegates. There were no reports.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Submitted: PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Janet Orth, Deputy Director for Administration