



MENDOCINO
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

367 North State Street~Ukiah~California~95482
www.mendocinocog.org

PHILLIP J. DOW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Administration: Suite 206
(707) 463-1859
Transportation Planning: Suite 204
(707) 234-3434

Special Meeting
AGENDA

Tuesday, July 25, 2017 at 1:30 p.m.

Primary Location

MCOG / Dow & Associates Conference Room
367 N. State Street, Suite 208, Ukiah

Audioconference Locations

Fort Bragg City Hall, 416 N. Franklin St., Fort Bragg
Point Arena City Hall, 451 School St., Point Arena

Call-in from Posted Locations: (866) 576-7975
Participant Access Code: 961240

NOTE: There will be no video recording or streaming of this meeting.

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)

NOTE: All items are considered for action unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order / Roll Call
2. Convene as RTPA
3. Recess as RTPA - Reconvene as Policy Advisory Committee

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

4. Participation is welcome in Council meetings. Comments will be limited to three minutes per person and not more than ten minutes per subject, so that everyone can be heard. "Public Expression" time is limited to matters under the Council's jurisdiction that may not have been considered by the Council previously and are not on the agenda. No action will be taken. Members of the public may comment also during specific agenda items when recognized by the Chair.

REGULAR CALENDAR

5. Consideration of Mendocino Transit Authority's Request for Local Transportation Funds to Purchase RouteMatch Software/Hardware System

CONSENT CALENDAR

The following items are considered for approval in accordance with Administrative Staff, Committee, and/or Directors' recommendations and will be enacted by a single motion. Items may be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate consideration, upon request by a Director or citizen.

6. Acceptance of June 26, 2017 Transit Productivity Committee Minutes

RATIFY ACTION

7. Recess as Policy Advisory Committee - Reconvene as RTPA - Ratify Action of Policy Advisory Committee

REPORTS

8. Reports – Information – *verbal reports*
 - a. Mendocino Transit Authority
 - b. MCOG Administration Staff
 - c. MCOG Planning Staff
 - d. MCOG Directors

ADJOURNMENT

9. Adjourn

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) REQUESTS

To request disability-related modifications or accommodations for accessible locations or meeting materials in alternative formats (as allowed under Section 12132 of the ADA) please contact the MCOG office at (707) 463-1859, at least 72 hours before the meeting, or in the case of a Special Meeting, at least 24 hours in advance.

POSTED 7/21/2017



MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Agenda # 5
Regular Calendar
MCOG Meeting
7/25/2017

STAFF REPORT

TITLE: Mendocino Transit Authority's Request for Local Transportation Funds to Purchase RouteMatch Software/Hardware System

SUBMITTED BY: Janet Orth, Deputy Director/CFO

DATE PREPARED: 7/19/2017

BACKGROUND:

On May 3, MCOG received a request from Mendocino Transit Authority (MTA) for \$380,000 of local funds to purchase additional components to their existing RouteMatch system (being installed for use in ADA paratransit service) to improve on-time performance, data collection, communications and other benefits for all of their transit services. On May 11, our Transit Productivity Committee (TPC) meeting scheduled for May 12 was cancelled due to MCOG staff's recommendation that new SB1 state funding sources be investigated for this purchase and MTA staff's subsequent withdrawal of the proposal pending this information.

At MCOG's board meeting of June 5, MTA General Manager Carla Meyer reported that she might request a special MCOG board meeting this summer (prior to the next meeting August 21) to consider MTA's claim for local transportation funds for this project, if the TPC made a recommendation in favor of it.

On June 22, MCOG received an updated request for the same system, MTA staff having found that the projected State Transit Assistance (STA) funds under SB1 will be entirely absorbed by MTA's Ten-Year Capital Plan, replacing the loss of federal funds. The STA revenues are based on the California Transit Association's projections, since the State Controller has yet to release official estimates. MTA General Manager Carla Meyer's letter concluded that "The MTA Board of Directors heartily supports" this proposal.

Available local funds. As discussed in board and committee meetings during FY 2017/18 budget development, MCOG has a one-time unallocated balance of Local Transportation Funds (LTF) that is available this year, from two months of sales tax revenues at \$596,200 resulting from a transition to the County Auditor's accrual method of accounting. MCOG's Board of Directors has made FY 2017/18 Budget allocations to LTF Reserve, MTA's annual transit claim, and the LTF 2% Bicycle & Pedestrian fund, reducing that balance to \$409,135. Allocations to transit purposes come to 45% of the \$596,200 available. (Recommendations for the remaining balance are on record in staff reports and meeting minutes.)

The funds are available in MCOG's budget, however the revenues are still to be collected from the sales tax. Staff discovered the availability of the funds last fall, prior to budget development, and that the two months in question were from 2016 sales taxes received in July and August. By that time, MTA's monthly allocations (the majority of the funds) had already been released on the monthly schedule, so in effect those allocations were advanced to MTA. Now we need to recover the funds in the upcoming July and August 2017 revenues.

Eligible allocations. In order of MCOG's allocation priorities under the Transportation Development Act (TDA), LTF funds may be allocated to Administration, Bicycle & Pedestrian facilities (up to 2%), Planning, and Transit. So this one-time windfall is available for all of these purposes. These revenues are not under the usual category of "balance available for transit" that MTA may claim. Therefore this proposal calls for a higher level of scrutiny than the annual transit claim. Funding of this request would mean over 95% of the reserved unallocated balance will have been allocated to transit purposes. MTA has pointed out the Legislative Intent of TDA cited in Section 99222: "It is in the interest of the state that funds available for transit development be fully expended to meet the transit needs that exist in California..."

Discussion of the proposal. There appear to be many benefits of the RouteMatch system, including safety, security and efficiency. The proposal describes three separate components: Core Fixed Route Management System Database (AVL), RouteShout Traveler Information System, and Push-To-Talk Communications. These are itemized in the proposal's budget, provided in MTA's slide presentation. MCOG staff raised a number of questions relative to cost proposal, priorities, pros & cons, product selection, and alternatives, which are addressed in the attached TPC meeting minutes.

Procedure for allocation/award. Mendocino Transit Authority may claim funds under the Transportation Development Act (TDA) Article 4, Section 99260(a) as detailed in Section 99262. The MCOG Board makes transit allocations annually in June, for the fiscal year to begin July 1 (adopted June 5, 2017). If the current request is approved for funding, MTA should submit a FY 2017/18 supplemental claim in MCOG's required format for TDA claims. When all MCOG claim filing requirements are delivered, this would meet TDA compliance for an allocation of Local Transportation Funds.

Staff and TPC members will be available to answer questions at the meeting.

ACTION REQUIRED:

Consider MTA's request for an allocation of local transportation funds to purchase the complete RouteMatch software/hardware system.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Council could choose to allocate full, partial, or no funding of MTA's current request or delay a decision.

RECOMMENDATION:

The TPC recommended that MCOG fund the RouteMatch acquisition at \$380,000 contingent on the accrued funds being received by MCOG to fund the request.

Enclosures:

MTA's letter requesting LTF funds dated June 21, 2017

TPC meeting minutes of June 26, 2017



SERVING MENDOCINO COUNTY SINCE 1976

June 21, 2017

Mr. Phil Dow, Executive Director
Mendocino Council of Governments
367 N. State Street, #206
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Mr. Dow

In November 2016, the MCOG Board of Directors approved utilization of Prop 1B Safety and Security funds for MTA to purchase Route Match Computer Aid Dispatch software (CAD) for the Dial-A-Ride program. At that time, dependent upon future grant funding opportunities, additional fixed route software that would provide AVL, on-time performance data and wireless ridership tracking by use of tablets, Push To Talk Technology and a public app for bus arrival/departure times was also discussed.

At the January and February, 2017 MCOG Executive Committee meeting, staff was advised that as a result of internal accounting procedural changes a one-time fund of excess LTF has been created. How to use these funds was discussed at both the January and February meetings. It was a unanimous decision of the executive committee to program some of the funds to the MTA fuel reserve account held by MCOG and to increase the FY 17/18 LTF allocation to MTA to the same as was received in FY 2016/17. Final disposition of the remaining funds would follow the Transit Productivity Committee Meeting scheduled for April 18, 2017.

During this time, the functionality and reliability of MTA's Base to Mobile communications abilities has continued to degrade to a level of serious concern and the problems with the ridership database have only magnified. Based on this 'perfect storm' of difficulties in essential MTA functions, staff contacted RouteMatch and requested a field test of the RouteMatch 'Push to Talk' technology in the MTA coverage area. On March 28, 2017, Teague Kirkpatrick of Route Match, Maintenance Manager Bob Butler and General Manager Carla Meyer tested the technology through Booneville, Anderson Valley, north through Mendocino and Fort Bragg, Hwy 20 to Willits and in the Ukiah area.

The conclusions were startlingly conclusive: unlike the current radio system, communications were clear and concise. The new technology would provide MTA with

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accurate and immensely improved ridership and the real-time location of vehicle data. Realistically given our terrain, there were some areas where cellular communications were eliminated and/or non-existent, however, the areas of disruption in cellular connection were fewer and more limited in extent, than similar areas of poor reception currently experienced with the mountain top repeaters.

Moreover, exploring our options for the future, it was determined that cellular coverage is more likely to be increased by more cell towers versus expansion of the mountain top radio repeater system sites. This makes the Push to Talk cellular technology more adaptive to the future as well as better matching current urgent needs.

At the March 29, 2017 Board of Directors meeting, Teague Kirkpatrick and myself presented the RouteMatch Fixed Route AVL Software, Push to Talk Technology and 'Route Shout', a public app for bus arrival/departure times and associated costs. The Board of Directors authorized the General Manager to present to the Transit Productivity Committee the need for this technology and pursue the \$390,000 for completion of this system through the excess LTF funds at the MCOG.

It is difficult to overstate the urgent need of a proper communications location tracking and seamless ridership information input system. While there may be unexplored patchwork solutions that will quilt a temporary fix, the Fixed Route Software was the solution to three (3) foremost problems currently facing MTA.

1) Ridership Data Tracking and Real-Time Route Performance:

With the recent award of the 5310 Mobility Manager grant, to be able to report ridership data semi-annually "correctly", MTA must now expend funds to upgrade its antiquated database system to track ridership as per FTA requirements and if possible, manually enter "actual" hours and minutes of each individual route.

2) On-Time Performance Tracking:

As was noted in the last two MCOG Triennial Reports (six-year window), MTA cannot track bus on-time performance. Staffing levels are not sufficient to have a Supervisor sit in a vehicle on a route and time a bus as it goes by. Not only is this information necessary to NTD reporting, but, very likely is a contributor to ridership decline.

3) Base to Mobile Communications:

The decline in the ability to communicate via the radio system has gone from bad to critical. Daily, Dispatchers are noting in the Dispatch log their inability to communicate with operators. As a result, MTA has expended funds to equip each driver with a cell phone and blue tooth device for use in the event of an emergency

The fact that MTA's ridership continues to decline may be a direct result of on-time performance. Reliability and confidence in timely service are vital to choice riders. At this time, short of sending out personnel to sit in staff vehicles and manually time buses on routes, no methodology is in place to provide consistent tracking of on-time performance and no "real-time" bus information is available to riders. The purchase of RouteShout software will allow passengers to locate their bus of choice from their cell phone.

At the May 31, 2017 MTA Board of Directors meeting, staff was given direction to finalize the MTA Capital Plan with an additional 10-year component and to request that the MCOG schedule a meeting of the Transit Performance Committee for presentation of the MTA RouteMatch Purchase proposal. In addition, staff has been directed to request that a special meeting of the MCOG Board of Directors be scheduled for the same presentation and hearing for request of the one-time LTF funds in the amount of \$390,000.

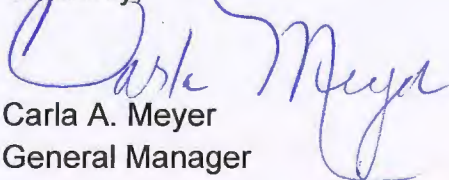
I have attached the Capital Plan as requested by the MTA Board of Directors for you and your staff's review. As you can see, many former funding sources are coming to an end and/or have been defunded at the Federal level. The recent passing of California SB1, while stabilizing the loss of the federal funds, does not augment the MTA budget to allow purchase of the software in the immediate future.

MTA staff is preparing a PowerPoint presentation for both the Transit Productivity Committee and MCOG staff that will provide additional information on the proposal to be presented at the Transit Performance Committee meeting. For your and MCOG staff's review, I have attached the PowerPoint that was presented to the MTA Board of Directors March, 2017 meeting, at which, you were in attendance that contains basic information for your analysis.

The MTA Board of Directors heartily supports the implementation and utilization of RouteMatch software applications that will modernize and streamline MTA's internal processes and procedures.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Carla A. Meyer
General Manager

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MENDOCINO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Agenda # 6
Consent Calendar
MCOG Meeting
7/25/2017

MINUTES

Transit Productivity Committee - TPC

June 26, 2017

Ukiah Valley Conference Center, 200 S. School St., Ukiah
MTA's Diana Stuart Fort Bragg Division, 190 East Spruce St., Fort Bragg

PRESENT:

MCOG Board Members: Dan Gjerde and Susan Ranochak
MTA Board Members: Jim Mastin and Jim Tarbell
Senior Centers Rep.: Charles Bush, Redwood Coast Seniors; Alt. Diana Clark, Ukiah Senior Center
MCOG Staff: Phil Dow, Janet Orth, and Marta Ford
MTA Staff: Carla Meyer, Bob Butler, Jeffrey Beard, John Pagan, and Jacob King

ABSENT: None

1. Call to Order. Chair Ranochak called the meeting to order at 1:19 p.m. Charles Bush and Jim Tarbell attended by videoconference from Fort Bragg.

2. Public Expression. None.

3. Review & Recommendation on Funding of Mendocino Transit Authority's Request for Local Transportation Funds to Purchase "RouteMatch Fixed Route AVL, Push to Talk Software / Hardware". Carla gave a slide presentation of MTA's request and details of the RouteMatch system. She noted that it was an updated version of the presentation she gave the MTA Board of Directors on March 29, 2017. Updates to the presentation addressed a list of questions raised by MCOG staff. It was noted that MTA already has acquired a module for its Dial-a-Ride paratransit service, due to be installed soon. The presentation featured components of the RouteMatch system:

- Fixed Route Management
- Mobile Data System
- Reporting & Analysis
- Traveler Information System
- Push-to-Talk Communications

Some benefits of the system are safety, security and efficiency. Examples of efficiency include mobile data entry to Android tablets, compared to handwritten tally sheet that drivers currently use to log ridership data. Carla summarized how information is collected for both methods, explaining how the manual method is labor intensive for drivers and clerical staff in the office and how the data obtained is inadequate for state reporting requirements and grant applications. By contrast, the software provides templates for streamlined input and customizable reports. The Fixed Route technology uses cell towers linking the agency server to busses, called Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL), for tracking. Push-to-Talk provides bidirectional communication and recording of incidents. The Traveler module is a smartphone application that uses GPS to give real-time updates to riders waiting at stops and other information. Examples were shown from Porterville's experience, which saw a 22% ridership increase. RouteMatch is the only system with unified modules from a single vendor.

To address MCOG's questions of cost proposal, priorities, pros & cons, product selection, and alternatives, Carla included the following answers in her presentation.

- Cost Proposal
 - The total request is \$380,000; amount in letter to MCOG of \$390,000 is a typo error.
 - Are there additional costs for installation, training or technical support? The first two are included. Tech support is included for the first two years and would become a part of MTA's annual operational costs.

- Is MTA covering any of the costs? Yes, MTA is contributing the balance of \$71,634 in its FY 2017/18 Capital Plan. MTA already has committed \$80,000 (through Cal-OES, Prop 1B).
- Priorities. Can the modules be phased in over time? Push-to-Talk is the most urgent need and requires the core Fixed Route Management system database to function. The Traveler module can be phased in later, but is a minor portion of the cost and has potential to increase ridership, so delay is not recommended by MTA.
- Pros and Cons. The “pros” have been well documented. Besides capital cost, need for MCOG approval, and incomplete cell coverage, are there any other downsides? Capital cost of Push-to-Talk is double that of purchasing new radios (annual fees are comparable), but radio technology is fading out from lack of investment. Push-to-Talk operates off of cell phone towers, which are being installed in more areas. (There was no comment on training time or learning curve for employees.)
- Product Selection. MCOG had received reports of Lake Transit Authority (LTA) problems with RouteMatch. MTA’s response:
 - Re increased ongoing support fees, LTA added vehicles after purchasing RouteMatch Fixed Route; cost increases were inevitable.
 - RouteMatch did not function well in the cellular phone network available in Lake County, however the radio mountaintop repeaters in that area have good coverage. The reverse is true in Mendocino.
 - LTA does not use the system as MTA intends to; the two operations are not comparable.
 - Re lack of basic reports for service monitoring and planning, RouteMatch is not a service planning tool.
 - MTA disagrees that RouteMatch does not report on-time performance.
 - LTA had suggested that if MTA used the same software as LTA, they could better coordinate scheduling of trips between the two counties. LTA does not use an integrated system, but instead a combination of separate software tools, which would not meet MTA’s needs. Conversely, RouteMatch would be able to utilize Lake County’s data for inter-county trip coordination.
 - MTA used its adopted procurement procedures to select this vendor and product.
 - Porterville Transit provided a reference from its experience using RouteMatch to run 14 vehicles, implemented in 2012.
- Alternatives. Carla had reported to MTA’s board that its current Filemaker database would be evaluated to determine ability to meet FTA requirements. This was done by the software developer, who concluded that it was outdated to the point that any attempted changes would “crash” the system.

Q&A and discussion included:

- Diana made several remarks in favor of the system, from the senior centers’ perspective. Charles asked how the senior centers’ transportation services could take advantage of it. Carla said RouteMatch could integrate their data, and the additional cost would be eligible for funding through FTA Section 5310 grants.
- What is the implementation timeframe? About six months. (Diana, Bob)
- Phil explained the events that led to availability of local TDA funds and discussed the additional State Transit Assistance (STA) funds that will result from the recently passed SB1 legislation.
- Carla’s 10-Year Capital Plan projection indicates the extra STA funds will make up a shortfall of federal funds and declining past STA funding, and not allow for any new investment in operations or infrastructure. MTA’s fleet replacement schedule is the first priority in the plan.
- It is disappointing that the people of California will be spending more for transit under SB1 and apparently will get nothing new from their investment. Where would MTA have looked to fund RouteMatch if MCOG did not have any local funds available? State TSSRA (Safety & Security) Prop 1B bond funds, which are winding down and not enough money; FTA 5310 or 5316 programs, although the next cycles are 2-3 years out. (Janet, Carla)
- Dan thought it would make sense to spend one-time funding (local TDA) on a one-time project expenditure.

Dan excused himself at 2:25 p.m. for another meeting.

- What is MTA's Retained Earnings fund balance? \$1.2 million, equivalent to three months of operating cash, as advised by the independent fiscal auditor. (Janet, Carla)
- While MCOG has a reserve of unallocated local funds on the books, the revenues have yet to come in, anticipated over July and August from sales tax deposits. What is timing of cash needs for this project? Invoicing would be phased over 3-4 months; MTA will get accurate information from the RouteMatch representative. (Janet, Bob, Carla)
- Timeline for MCOG's decision? MTA has requested a special board meeting for this request; so far a quorum has not responded for a July meeting. The next scheduled meeting is August 21. (Janet, Phil)
- It was agreed that an additional meeting of MCOG's board would not be required, barring an emergency. (All)
- Charles summarized his remaining issues: 1) We ought to modernize; 2) There is money in MCOG's budget but uncertainty as to its availability; and 3) Why is MTA's communication system collapsing?—this is news. The group reviewed these questions.
- The repeater towers are on their way out; there is no point in investing in the old radio system. (Jim T.)

Recommendation:

Upon motion by Ranochak, seconded by Bush, and carried on roll call vote (*4 Ayes – Ranochack, Mastin, Tarbell, and Bush; 0 Noes; 1 Absent - Gjerde*), the TPC recommended that MCOG fund the RouteMatch acquisition at \$380,000 contingent on the accrued funds being received by MCOG to fund the request.

4. Miscellaneous / Members' Concerns / Announcements. None.

5. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

Submitted by Janet Orth, Deputy Director/CFO