



Mendocino COGnizance

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

Issue #13
Summer
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New Roles for Regions

As another summer rolls by and Mendocino County enjoys unusually mild weather, we reflect on the growing concerns over climate change in California and around the world. State legislation is handing down new mandates to deal with this threat, such as Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006. One tool for meeting greenhouse gas emission targets may be new Regional Transportation Plan guidelines. Pending legislation will further define such requirements if signed into law.

Regional approaches to problems that cross jurisdictional boundaries are becoming more prevalent. "Blueprints" are becoming a new standard that MCOG is watching closely. Starting in metropolitan areas, this is a means to coordinate local plans for issues such as transportation, land use, jobs, housing and air quality.

The California Regional Blueprint Planning Program grants seed funding to regional agencies for involving stakeholders in producing comprehensive plans for growth scenarios preferred by their communities. Adopting blueprint plans may provide a competitive advantage for some funding sources such as the new bond programs. Here again, legislation is in play as these ideas are developed. MCOG planning staff has begun attending statewide blueprint training workshops.

Meanwhile, at a time when fuel consumption, traffic congestion and carbon emissions are of increasing concern, public transit is held out as a key mobility solution that can decrease these impacts. Yet transit funds are a target in the balancing act of State budget negotiations. As we go to press, the Legislature has sent a Fiscal Year 2007-08 budget to the Governor for signature that raids well over \$1 billion of transit funds for other (mostly transportation related) purposes.

Public Transportation Account funds, which flow into various transit programs, are taking the hit. Mendocino Transit Authority could lose up to \$1 million of funds already programmed for replacing its fleet vehicles over the next several years. It is likely that MCOG will need to make adjustments to the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Other transportation funding is in better shape. Proposition 42 funds remain dedicated to transportation purposes as mandated by the voters. Proposition 1B bond funds for transportation projects have been approved for the Willits Bypass and local county and city projects.

For more information on regional issues in California, visit www.calcog.org and www.calregions.org.



A traditional trestle bridge along the scenic Mendocino Coast on State Route 1, where the Albion River meets the sea.

MCOG Highlights of 2006/07

Willits Bypass Funded for First Phase

After many long years of planning, environmental study, public input and financial negotiations, the U.S. 101 Bypass of Willits finally received enough construction funding to proceed.

- See www.mendocinocog.org

Gualala Plan Completed

This grant project resulted in a Community Action Plan. MCOG has applied for a second-phase planning grant.

- See www.mendocinocog.org

Triennial Performance Audit

MCOG received another independent audit as required by the Transportation Development Act. The report showed good results, and recommendations were made for facilitating transit, assisting local project delivery, and planning for staff succession.

Point Arena Bikeway Completed

After more than 10 years of planning efforts, a ribbon cutting was joyfully celebrated for this Transportation Enhancement project.

- See story Page 2



2007/08 Calendar

Board Meetings

1st Monday at 1:30 p.m., nine to ten months a year, at Ukiah Civic Center, 300 Seminary Avenue, unless otherwise noted..

Planned highlights and recurring actions (subject to change):

- July No Meeting in July
- Aug. 27 TPC Recommendations: MTA Performance Review
TAC Recommendations: Amend 2007/08 OWP
- Sept. No Meeting in September
- Oct. 1 Presentation of Laytonville Planning Grant Results
(at Laytonville Fire Department, 44950 Willis Ave.)
- Nov. 5 2008 State Transportation Improvement Program
(STIP) Initial Review & Policy Discussion
- Dec. 3 SSTAC Recommendations:
2008/09 Unmet Transit Needs - Public Hearing
- Feb. 4 Elect Officers, Make Committee Appointments
- Mar. 3 Acceptance of 2006/07 Annual Fiscal Audits
TAC Recommendations: Adopt 2008 Regional
Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)
- Apr. 7 Executive Committee Recommendations:
Draft 2008/09 Budget
- May 5 TPC Recommendations:
Unmet Transit Needs, Annual Transit Claim
- June 2 Adopt 2008/09 RTPA Budget
Adopt 2008/09 Planning Overall Work Program
Make Annual Finding of Unmet Transit Needs

MCOG's Purpose

MCOG was formed as a joint powers agency in 1972, as mandated by state law, the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The Council primarily serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for our countywide region. Two county supervisors, a county elected official, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities make up Board membership. A representative of Caltrans serves on the Policy Advisory Committee with the seven directors.

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. MCOG is a political subdivision of the State of California.

Acting as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, MCOG programs or allocates various types of local, state and federal transportation funds to Caltrans, the County of Mendocino and the four incorporated Cities of Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Willits, and Point Arena. In addition to projects on state highways and within its five member jurisdictions, MCOG helps support transportation activities of the North Coast Rail Authority, Mendocino Transit Authority, local airports, and others. Projects involve planning, capital improvements, rehabilitation and maintenance, fleet replacement, and intermodal transit centers.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

September-To Be Announced: Process for Next Staffing Contract
February-TBA: Budget Recommendations for 2008/09

Transit Productivity Committee (TPC)

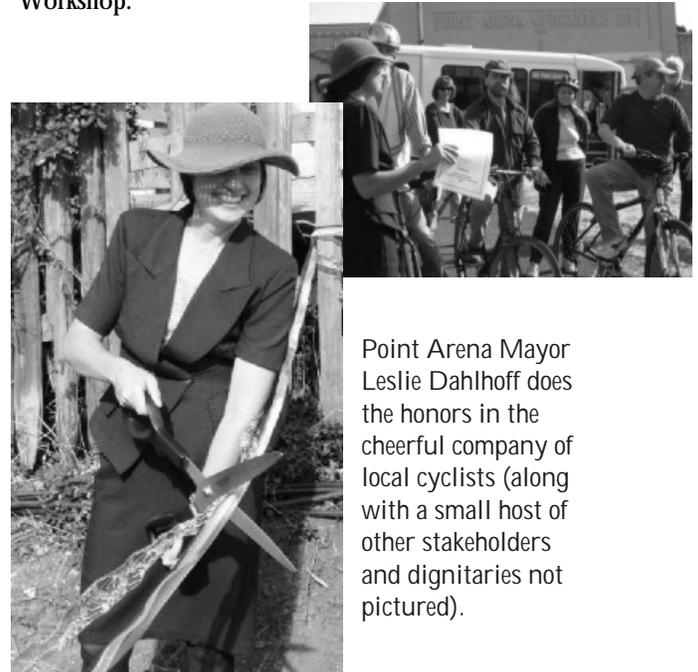
April/May-TBA: Unmet Transit Needs Recommendations,
Review of Annual Transit Claim, and
Annual Transit Performance

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

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

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.



Point Arena Mayor Leslie Dahlhoff does the honors in the cheerful company of local cyclists (along with a small host of other stakeholders and dignitaries not pictured).

Point Arena Cuts Ribbon

The Point Arena Coastal Access Scenic Bikeway has been a long time in coming. Leslie Dahlhoff first began the application process in 1993 with the late MCOG executive director Mary (Spangler) Hiatt for federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds. The total project cost was anticipated to be \$500,000. Eventually, two cycles of TE funds granted \$767,000, and state and local matching funds were secured. The total cost was nearly \$1 million. Environmental issues were encountered, and the rare Point Arena Mountain Beaver's habitat was protected.

Through sheer perseverance, 13 years later the bikeway was officially opened, creating a safe, mile-long cycling route from downtown to the municipal pier. An accessible public restroom was built at the Highway 1 terminus. MCOG, Caltrans District 1, City representatives and cyclists attended the ceremony. We offer our congratulations to all involved.

2007/08 Budget Allocations

Local Transportation Fund

The MCOG Board annually allocates the locally collected quarter-cent sales tax under the Transportation Development Act (TDA), which is deposited to the Local Transportation Fund. In June, MCOG allocated nearly \$3.5 million for 2007/08, an increase of about five percent over last year. In order of priority according to policy, \$265,587 went to Administration of the agency; two percent to Bicycle & Pedestrian projects at \$58,781; the Planning program received \$100,000 in new funds; and Mendocino Transit Authority received \$2,910,866. In addition, \$130,620 was allocated from prior year excess revenue, leaving \$190,000 in Reserve for transit as needed.

Unmet Transit Needs

MCOG annually follows a process of identifying unmet transit needs. For FY 2007/08, MCOG found, through committee work and public hearings, that "there are unmet transit needs that are reasonable to meet." The needs funded in the new year's budget are Willits Flex Route, Ukiah Valley Evening Bus, and Coast Saturday Service (Routes 5, 60 and 75). The first two services have already started. All those interested in participating or submitting an unmet need for this fall's list are encouraged to contact MCOG or MTA.

Planning Funds

Various state and federal grants and local funds comprise MCOG's Planning budget. The 2007/08 Overall Work Program funds planning projects by the Cities, County, MTA, and MCOG staff. Including projects carried over and pending grants, the program will total \$766,865.

Other Transportation Funds

In addition, MCOG allocates State Transit Assistance funds to MTA each year, at \$350,000 in new funds for 2007/08. The STA funds are a hot topic statewide this year and subject to a wide variance in estimates, pending adoption of the State budget. Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are distributed by MCOG to the Cities and County annually for streets and roads or other transportation needs, at \$531,937 in 2007/08; also \$100,000 was allocated to a regional capital project fund. The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) has fluctuated from \$0 to \$18 million over the past several years.

2007/08 Budget Allocations

Local Transportation Fund	3,461,248
State Transit Assistance (STA)	414,951
Transit Capital Reserve	465,974
Planning, Program'g & Monitor'g	129,851
Rural Planning Assistance	275,000
Community Based Transportation Plan'g	136,000
<u>Regional Surface Transportation Program</u>	<u>631,937</u>
Total Allocations	5,514,961
For Later Allocation (STA)	79,659



Meet Our Staff

Nephele Barrett has been with Dow & Associates since 2000, serving both MCOG and its regional agency counterpart in Lake County. On July 1, 2007, she was promoted to Senior Transportation Planner. She assists local member governments with the STIP process and other state and federal programs, at which she has become our

resident expert. This year she will be developing the Consolidated Human Services Transportation Plan and Regional Housing Needs Allocation, and attending training workshops for the new "blueprint" regional planning that is rising to the fore. Nephele (neh-FEE-lee) works just part time at the office, as she is a dedicated mom involved with activities of her three children and their schools. She also manages to find time to enjoy reading, movies, and traveling with her family.

MCOG Projects for 2007/08

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:

- 1 - Current Planning
- 2 - Long Range Planning
- 3 - City of Fort Bragg - Main Street Realignment
- 4 - County DOT - Road System Traffic Safety Review
- 5 - City of Ukiah - Storm Drain Study
- 6 - County DOT - Special Studies
- 7 - STIP Planning, Programming & Monitoring
- 8 - Laytonville Traffic Calming & Downtown Revitalization *
- 9 - Gualala Community Action Plan/Phase 2
- 10 - County DOT - ADA Comprehensive Access Plan *
- 11 - Ukiah - GIS Curb Ramp/Storm Drain Inventory *
- 12 - County Planning - General Plan Circulation Element *
- 14 - Training
- 15 - County Planning - State Route 1 Corridor Study *
- 16 - County Road System Right of Way Database/Phase 2
- 19 - City of Ukiah - Traffic Circulation Study/Phase 3 *
- 21 - AB 1600 Study - Ukiah Valley Area

* Carryover from prior year.

(Note: Some element numbers are unused this year.)
For program details, contact Loretta at MCOG.

Laytonville Community Design Charette

Laytonville's Community Based Transportation Planning grant got underway this spring. Funded by Caltrans and sponsored by MCOG, the Traffic Calming & Downtown Revitalization: Planning for a Livable Community project involves local stakeholders through a participatory process known as a "charette."

Other project partners include Laytonville Area Municipal Advisory Council (LAMAC), Local Government Commission, County of Mendocino, and the Cahto Tribe. Through a bid process, the consultant firm selected was Design, Community & Environment (DC&E) from Berkeley.

DC&E's professional planners led the community charette as a week-long "design fair" on location from May 19 through 24. Examples from other communities were shown to stimulate ideas and to demonstrate tools and options available. Everyone was welcome to join in the brainstorming sessions and share their visions.

Documented results of the design fair workshops next go to the Local Government Commission and consultants to write a conceptual plan that identifies improvements for pedestrian and vehicle safety, downtown visual aesthetics, economic enhancements for local business, and future land uses such as housing and community gathering spaces. Funding sources to implement the vision will be identified in the plan.

The draft plan will be reviewed by the project's Technical Advisory Committee and LAMAC. A presentation will be made October 1 (see Page 2). Finally, MCOG's Board will adopt the plan in a public hearing.

Three additional funded transportation projects are in the works for Laytonville over the next year or two, for a total value of \$2,836,102. For more information, contact Loretta at MCOG.

Above far right: Bruce Brubaker, a planner at Design, Community & Environment, kicks off a walking tour of downtown Laytonville on a bright Sunday morning in May.



After the walk, a breakout group at the Citizens' Design Studio sketches ideas on an aerial-view map of the study area. Later in the day, a spokesperson from each table presented their results to the whole group.



Board of Directors

Marsha Wharff, Chair
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 Tami Jorgensen, Vice Chair
 Willits Mayor
 Dan Gjerde, Executive Committee
 Fort Bragg City Councilmember
 Leslie Dahlhoff
 Point Arena Mayor
 John McCowen
 Ukiah City Councilmember
 David Colfax
 County Supervisor, 5th District
 John Pinches
 County Supervisor, 3rd District
 Cheryl Willis, MCOG Policy Advisory Committee
 Caltrans District 1 Planning Chief

Alternates (by optional appointment)
 Mari Rodin - Ukiah City Council
 Dave Turner - Fort Bragg City Council
 Holly Madrigal - 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
 Alexis Pedrotti, Administrative Assistant

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